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ABSTRACT

Designed for use with sixth grade students, this multidisciplinary unit combines independent study of urban areas with activities to develop students' higher level thinking skills. Following suggestions to teachers on strategies for introducing the unit, four options for independent study are described. The first is a study of a topic related to cities. Students can present their findings in a variety of forms such as songs, radio shows, a guide book, or a skit. The second option is a study of any well-known city. An outline is provided of the major findings which should be included in such a report. In the third option for independent study, students learn about their own community by conducting interviews with various city officials and public servants. For the final option, a series of task cards provides short activities on urban study. Each activity is tagged to a specific thinking skill. A bibliography concludes the unit. This document is one of a collection of materials from the Iowa Area Education Agency 7 Teacher Center project. (LP)

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THE CITY---

A multidisciplinary unit exercising the higher level thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

by

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The format and the strategies suggested in this unit were classroom-tested with sixth grade students. They provide a multidisciplinary approach to a unit of study and exercise the higher level thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

GOALS OF UNIT

To recognize that a city is unique and is a constantly changing composite of cultures, people, and their activities.

To become aware of the economy and the interdependence of citizens within a community.

To recognize a city's interdependence with other sections of the state, nation, and world.

To become aware of one's own community as a resource and an extension of the school environment.

- - -

To exercise higher level thinking skills.

To use a multidisciplinary approach in studying a unit.

To practice communication of research through different media.

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THE CITY

INTRODUCTORY SESSION

The introductory session of the unit might be a metro bus tour of the students' city, a film presentation of any city, or other appropriate stimuli. The writer chose to share her slides of New Orleans. The filmstrip of that presentation with cassette narration accompanies this unit. The purpose of the activity or the presentation is to stimulate the children's thinking and curiosity and to provide direction to the study.

Following the activity or presentation, the teacher will lead the class in a discussion. They should compile a list of their observations regarding the filmstrip. Lead the students to frame questions regarding cities, generally and specifically. Depending on the class, it may break into small groups to perform the brainstorming and then share results with the entire class. In any event, all questions shall be posted where all class members can see them. After the class discussion, categorize the questions and divide the class into small groups. Assign a category to each group and supply the group with one large sheet of paper and a marking pen. Direct each group to compile the questions relating to its assigned category and to add five to ten more questions for research. When the groups have completed categorization, the sheets of questions are displayed in the room.

SELECTION OF TOPICS FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY

Through the process of discussion, generation of questions, and categorization, students will have found areas of interest. At this time, each student will determine a topic for independent study. With teacher assistance a purpose statement, outline,

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and study contract shall be drawn. The range of topics will vary from class to class, but will probably include government, taxes and income, transportation, tourism, industry, ethnic origins, geography, famous persons, legends, climate, etc.

As can be noted, this plan permits the student to select a general topic relating to "cities." If the teacher desires a more directed approach, each child could simply be permitted to select a famous city for the independent study topic. The class questions can then be used in writing an outline pertaining to that city.

The student's independent study contract should be developed with an emphasis on comparisons, observations, investigation of hypotheses, analysis, and evaluation. For example, an outline might emphasize particular thinking skills in three parts as follows: I) Deal with factual information regarding the topic, II) Discuss, compare, and contrast the information, and III) Evaluate the information, recommend improvements, and project the future. The teacher's role is to facilitate, observe, critique, guide, act as a resource, analyze, evaluate, and sincerely accept the student's efforts.

OPTIONS

The choice of options depends on the time allotment for the unit as well as the student and teacher interest in the topic. The teacher may wish to use all of the options or a combination. A minimum requirement may be set, and the student may choose additional activities or projects. Four options are listed below.

I: Pursue independent study of a topic related to cities. Report the results of your study. A few suggestions for reporting results follow:

story	paint a picture
poem	TV special

game	radio show
play	song
diary	advertising campaign
panel	make a mini-page
news article	film
filmstrip	magazine article
cartoon strip	puppet show
tourism brochure	visitor's guide book
write a walking tour of the city	speech
mobile	

II. Independent study of any well-known city. Research shall include the following:

A. Climate and geography
B. History of city
    1. Origins
    2. Site
        a. Appropriateness of site and why chosen
        b. Planned or evolved
    3. Turning points in the history of the city
C. Cultural opportunities which are available such as music, theater, ballet, etc.
D. Historical features or sites of interest
E. Recreational facilities
F. Citizens
    1. Early settlers and immigrants
    2. Ethnic groups and contributions
    3. Religion and effect on city
    4. Famous citizens and contributions to society
G. Industry and Business
    1. Trade with other cities
    2. Sources of raw materials-flow of goods and services
    3. Interdependence of citizens

H. Unique features of the city
   1. Events of significance
   2. Battles, documents, etc.

III. Know your community--Interviews and mini-field trips. Using brainstorming sessions with small groups and synthesizing as a total group, the class generates a list of city governmental agencies, services, cultural opportunities, etc. to investigate. Students select areas of interest, determine whom to interview in the community, and with the teacher's assistance make the contact with the person and/or agency, set up the appointment, and pursue the interview. It is important to encourage the students to be as independent as possible in setting up their interviews and field trips. Encourage them to use the telephone directory, yellow pages, and to make their own contacts. Parents or mentors will be needed to drive children to and from interviews which may take place during or after school hours. The writer has found that the children enjoy working with one to three other children on this option. Interviews and mini-field trips may include the following:

Mayor
Police
Museum
University
Public Library
Technical School
Hospitals
Day Care Centers
Transportation Dept.
Community Theater
City Hall
City Engineer
Architects
Sanitary Inspection
Building Inspection
Milk, Food, and Water laboratory
Recreation Commission
Radio
TV
Chamber of Commerce
Water Commission
Waste-Sewage
Fire Department
Services of United Way (Big Brothers/Big Sisters)
Symphony
Airport

IV. Investigative Activity Cards

The following pages contain activity cards which are multidisciplinary. They are meant to be laminated and placed in a card file for easy use by the student.

1

Analysis
Synthesis
Evaluation

6

TASK:

1. Analyze the different wildlife forms in your city.
2. Judge which wildlife you think should be preserved.
3. Write a handbook telling ways people can contribute to the preservation of that wildlife.

PRODUCT: Handbook

2

Analysis
Synthesis

TASK:

1. Invite community resource persons such as people from the parks department, veterinarians, or naturalists to speak to your class on wildlife in your city.
2. Produce a guide to wildlife in the city.

PRODUCT: Wildlife Guide

3

Application
Synthesis
Analysis
Evaluation

TASK: Many jobs in a city are performed by people for no pay. Such jobs are done by volunteers. Interview ten adults asking them two questions:

1. What volunteer work do you do in the community? Hours/Week?
2. What are some volunteer jobs that you know are being performed in the city?

Then, make a chart of volunteer work and the hours contributed per week or month. Finally, figure the actual cost at minimum wage if volunteers were paid for their time. Evaluate the value of the volunteer work in a community.

PRODUCT: Chart Essay Composition

4

Comprehension
Analysis
Synthesis
Evaluation

TASK: The local government may be organized in many ways. Discover how your city government is organized to meet its citizens' basic needs.

Compare the form of government in your city to that of another city. Show the similarities and differences in a chart.

Evaluate the effectiveness of your city government in meeting its citizens' needs.

PRODUCT: Chart Essay Speech Radio TV

5

Evaluation
Synthesis

TASK: Decide what cultural sites in your city should be included in a tour of the city. Write a description for each site and create a map or guide booklet for such a tour. Include sites such as the museum, library, art center, etc.

PRODUCT: Map Booklet Narrative

6

Comprehension
Synthesis
Evaluation

TASK: Invite three-to-five people who are active in the visual and performing arts in your community to share their interests in a panal discussion in your class. Compare and contrast the visual and performing arts opportunities in your community with those in other communities. What changes would you recommend?

PRODUCT: Panel Discussion Letter Essay

7

Comprehension
Analysis
Synthesis

TASK: Identify and make a collage of the ethnic groups which have contributed to your city's population. Compare the number of ethnic groups in your city with the number in the following cities: New Orleans, London, Peking, Boise, Salt Lake City, and Pella, Iowa. Analyze the reasons for the differences and similarities.

PRODUCT: Chart Graphs Collage Report

8

Evaluation
Synthesis

TASK: Decide what historical sites in your city should be included in a tour of the city. Write a description of each site and create a map for such a tour.

PRODUCT: Map Narrative

9

Comprehension
Analysis
Evaluation

TASK: Investigate taxes and how they support city government. Invite a speaker to your classroom to discuss the various types of taxes and how they are collected and used. Evaluate how you would change the assessment of and use of tax money.

PRODUCT: Speaker Discussion Panel Debate Essay

10

Comprehension
Analysis
Synthesis
Evaluation

TASK: Research how the economical needs of the poor and the elderly are met in your city.

Evaluate the programs you research. Recommend any changes you think should be met.

PRODUCT: Report Letter to Agencies Essay

11

Synthesis
Evaluation

TASK: Create two drawings predicting the future appearance of rural areas and cities.

Evaluate the quality of life in that future.

PRODUCT: Drawing Story Narration Tape Song

12

Comprehension
Analysis
Synthesis
Evaluation

TASK: Collect labels showing where products were packaged, made, assembled, or grown. Develop a bulletin board with a map of the United States and/or World. Mark the cities to which the labels refer.

Lead the class discussion on the correlation of product with the area from which it comes and the climate and crops of the area to the product produced there.

PRODUCT: Bulletin Board Display Class Discussion

13

Analysis
Synthesis

TASK:

1. Compare the types of transportation in your city with that of 50 years ago.
2. Imagine the changes there will be in types of transportation in the next 100 years.

PRODUCT: Illustrated Timeline Drawings with Narrative

14

Synthesis
Analysis

TASK: Create two collages--a city collage and a rural collage. Cut out headlines, phrases, words, and pictures that represent a city to a rural area.

Compare and contrast the collages.

PRODUCT: Collage chart narrative speech report

15

Analysis

TASK: Compare and contrast the services provided to its citizens by a city of more than 100,000 population and the services provided to its citizens by a city of not over 10,000.

PRODUCT: Make a game | TV | Magazine article
Report | Radio | City Council Meeting (Drama)

16

Analysis
Synthesis

TASK:

1. Compare the types of private shelter in your city with that of 50 years ago.
2. Imagine the changes there will be in types of shelter in the next 100 years.

PRODUCT: Illustrated Timeline | Drawings with Narrative

17

Analysis
Synthesis
Evaluation

TASK: Imagine that your city had been planned like Washington, D.C. or Salt Lake City were before any building was erected.

1) Compare your present city to Salt Lake City

2) Describe how pre-planning would have affected your city's appearance today.

PRODUCT: Map Pictures Drawings

18

Analysis
Synthesis
Evaluation

TASK:

1. Graph the population of ten cities over a period of 50 years.
2. Speculate why some have remained the same, decreased, or increased in population.
3. Justify your speculations.

PRODUCT: Panel Graph Narrative

19

Synthesis

15

TASK: Research the history of the public library system in your city. Create a play to share your research with the public or your classroom. Contact the library and tell them of your project and willingness to produce your play for the library.

PRODUCT: Play

20

Analysis
Synthesis

TASK: Compare and contrast a city in the United States with a city in India or China. Imagine what similarities and differences between cities will emerge in the next thirty years.

PRODUCT: Story Posters Filmstrip Diorama
Models Books Tapes

21 Analysis

TASK: How would you feel if you were poor?
If you were a millionaire?

PRODUCT: Report Play Song
Diary Letter Monoloque

22 Synthesis

TASK: Hypothesize on why in a time of surpluses, people are starving. Research the facts and interview people in the community (County Extension Service, Social Services, ministers, business people, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Services, etc.)

PRODUCT: Report Game Story Radio Show
Diagram Chart

23

Analysis

TASK: How would life in your city be affected if buildings could only be one story high?

PRODUCT: Essay Drawings Filmstrip Cartoon

24

Analysis
Evaluation

TASK: Cemeteries record part of the history of a city. Visit an old cemetery or an old section of a local cemetery. Compare the size, shape, style, and kinds of stones in the tombstones. Report your observations and opinions. What do they reveal about the time in which the people lived.

PRODUCT: Chart Report Graph Illustration
Speech Filmstrip

25

Evaluation

TASK: Cemeteries record part of the history of a city. Visit an old cemetery.

1) Note the ages and causes of death on the tombstones. Note the epitaphs.

2) Note the number of members in family plots.

3) Note the proximity of date of deaths in families and neighboring plots.

Discuss what causes might be inferred from your observations regarding the differences in life-spans and from other observations you have made.

PRODUCT: Panel discussion Essay Speech

26

Recall
Synthesis

TASK: Cemeteries record part of the history of a city. Visit an old cemetary. Note the names on the tombstones.

1) Are any descendants still living in the community?

2) Are any landmarks, streets, or businesses named for them.

3) With your mentor's assistance seek out the records for this cemetery. What conclusions about your community might you infer from your observations?

PRODUCT: Chart Report Speech

27

Analysis

TASK: Cemeteries record part of the history of a city. Visit an old cemetery. Compare and contrast a local cemetery with the old New Orleans cemeteries.

PRODUCT: Pictures Narration Report Speech Maps

28

Analysis
Synthesis
Evaluation

TASK: Travel your metro transportation system. Observe the time taken to travel, the comfort, the cost, and the accommodations for all ages and for handicapped. Evaluate the system.

PRODUCT:

1. Recommendation--Letter to Metro Transit authorities.
2. Invite a transit bus driver or official to speak to your class.

29

Analysis

30

TASK: Pretent you are a missionary in a city in India where people are starving; what will you do?

PRODUCT: Letter Legislative proposal Panel Discussion
Magazine Article

30

Application
Evaluation

TASK: Diagram the source of raw materials, the manufacturing, and the distribution of finished products of an industry in your city. Lead a class discussion evaluating the efficiency of the flow of goods and how it might be improved.

PRODUCT:

1. Diagram
2. Lead a class discussion

31

Synthesis

21

TASK: Design a city on an island, desert, or mountain. Show how it will differ from cities located in a different environment. Consider the following: shelter, food, clothing, education, recreation, government, cultural needs, transportation, churches, trade and industry.

PRODUCT: Map Model Diorama Display
Narration

32

Analysis

TASK: Compare and contrast the industries of Waterloo with those of another city.

PRODUCT: Report Interview Panel Discussion
Chart Graph

33

Analysis

TASK: How would life in your city be affected if there were no streets?

PRODUCT:

Chart	Map	Pictures
Play	Letter	Report
TV Newscast	Radio	Panel Discussion
Essay	Diary	

34

Synthesis

TASK: Design a city which will meet the citizens' needs. Consider the following: shelter, food, clothing, education, recreation, government, cultural needs, transportation, churches, industry.

PRODUCT: Map Diorama Model Blueprint

35

Synthesis

TASK: Hypothesize on why people love and hate. Create a product that demonstrates your hypothesis.

PRODUCT: Play TV talk show Poem Pantomine Story

36

Ambiguity
Analysis

TASK: Pretend you are a policeman who has been assigned to the neighborhood in which you grew up. How will it affect your feelings and how will you act?

PRODUCT: Monologue Speech Essay Letter Play

37

Analysis

24

TASK: Show how a city is like a family.

PRODUCT: Write a play Make a chart Compose a song

38

Ambiguity
Analysis

TASK: Determine how a city environment provides for peoples' social needs, yet denies their needs.

PRODUCT: Survey Graph Report

39

Analysis
Evaluation

TASK: Classify and chart cities by coastal, river, or inland categories.

Evaluate how the location of the city affects the type of products that are exported and imported.

PRODUCT: Chart Report Tape Speech

40

Analysis

TASK: How would life in your city be affected if there were no city government?

PRODUCT: Play Story Essay Videotape Filmstrip

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